

## Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-02

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EB-02 /005 R

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APPROVED BY: AF: W: O. RUDOLPH AGGREY

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R 202147 Z APR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 075038

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SEXSTATE WASHDC INFO ABIDJAN, BONN,  
BRUSSELS, COPENHAGE, DAKAR, DUBLIN, LAGOS, LUXEMBOURG,  
NIAMEY, PARIS, ROME, THE HAGUE, EC BRUSSELS, GENEVA, OECD  
PARIS APRIL 16, 1973 FROM LONDON IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 04621

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: ETRD, EEC, UK, US, XA

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN UK POSITION ON REVERSE PREFERENCES

REFS: (A) LONDON 3845, (B) EC BRUSSELS 1817,

(C) EC BRUSSELS 1818

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE

HAS SUCCEEDED IN ITS ATTEMPT

(REF A) TO CHANGE THE BRITISH POSITION ON REVERSE  
PREFERENCES. THE UK WILL NOW ACTIVELY OPPOSE THE  
INCLUSION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES IN THE COMMUNITY'S  
AGREEMENTS WITH THE YAOUNDE CONVENTION COUNTRIES, THE  
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COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIABLES AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

2. ACCORDING TO DAVID RATFORD ( DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION DIVISION AT THE FCO), THE UK WILL ARGUE WITHIN THE EC THAT SINCE A NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY'S EXISTING ASSOCIATION ARRANGEMENTS, AN EC POSITION FAVORING THE ELIMINATION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES WOULD ENCOURAGE A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR NEW EC ASSOCIATION ARRANGEMENTS THAT ARE DUE TO BEGIN NEXT AUGUST. MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION BY THE AFRICANS IS A MAJOR UK OBJECTIVE WHICH BRITISH OFFICIALS CONSIDER TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH, THE COMMUNITY AND THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES. RATFORD TOLD US THAT IF THE UK IS UNABLE TO PERSUADE ALL THE EC MEMBER STATES TO ENDORSE THE ELIMINATION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES, ITS FALLBACK POSITION WILL BE THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD LEAVE THE ISSUE OF REVERSE PREFERENCES OPEN UNTIL THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AFRICANS ARE UNDERWAY.

3. RATFORD SAID THAT U. S. HOSTILITY TO REVERSE PREFERENCES WAS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO CHANGE ITS POLICY, BUT THE UK WILL PLAY DOWN THIS ASPECT IN INTRA- COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS IN ORDER TO FORESTALL CHARGES THAT IT IS ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICANS.

4. AS FOR THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF REVERSE PREFERENCES IN THE COMMISSION'S INITIAL REPORT ON THE FORTHCOMING ASSOCIATION NEGOTIATIONS ( REFS B AND C), RATFORD SAID THAT IF AN AFRICAN COUNTRY ( FOR EXAMPLE, SENEGAL) WANTS TO GRANT PREFERENCES TO THE COMMUNITY, IT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO IN A SEPARATE AGREEMENT OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ASSOCIATION ARRANGEMENTS. ON THE QUESTION OF CONFORMITY WITH THE GATT, THE UK AGREES WITH

THE COMMISSION THAT AN ARTICLE XXV WAIVER THAT HAS TO BE RENEWED EACH YEAR WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE, BUT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT AN ALTERNATIVE LEGAL BASIS UNDER THE TERMS OF PART IV OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT.  
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5. ACCORDING TO RATFORD, THE UK WOULD NOT OPPOSE AN INVITATION TO LIBERIA, SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA TO JOIN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT WILL BEGIN NEXT AUGUST. WITH REGARD TO THE COMMISSION' S PROPOSALS ON COMMODITY ARRANGEMENTS, AN OFFICIAL AT DTI INDICATED THAT THE UK IS NOT FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO ARRANGEMENTS OF THIS KIND, BUT IT MAY ACCEPT THEM IN THE ABSENCE OF A BETTER ALTERNATIVE. A WORKING GROUP HAS BEEN FORMED WITHIN HMG TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS ON COMMODITIES. RATFORD SAID THAT THE UK IS LIKELY TO BE IN FAVOR OF THE COMMISSION' S PROPOSAL THAT THE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND SHOULD BE FINANCED FROM THE COMMUNITY' S " OWN RESOURCES."

6 . RATFORD DOUBTS THAT THE DEPARTURE OF DENIAU WILL RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE COMMISSION' S POSITION ON AFRICAN ASSOCIATION, AND BELIEVES THAT CHEYSSON ( DENIAU' S SUCCESSOR) IS LIKELY TO SUPPORT FRENCH POSITIONS TO THE SAME EXTENT THAT DENIAU DID. OTHER BRITISH OFFICIALS DO NOT RULE OUT CHANGES, HOWEVER. THEY NOTE THAT IT WILL BE EASIER FOR CHEYSSON TO REVERSE ESTABLISHED COMMISSION POSITIONS THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR DENIAU, AND POINTED OUT THAT CHEYSSON HAS A REPUTATION FOR BEING AN " UNCONVENTIONAL" FRENCH CIVIL SERVANT.

7. COMMENT. THE EVOLUTION IN THE BRITISH POSITION ON REVERSE PREFERENCES IS CLEARLY A FAVORABLE ONE FROM THE U. S. POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO ASSIST THE UK IN ITS EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE TO OPPOSE REVERSE PREFERENCES, WE BELIEVE THAT U. S. OFFICIALS SHOULD REFRAIN FROM HIGHLIGHTING THE EXTENT TO WHICH UK VIEWS ARE CONSISTENT WITH OUR OWN.

8. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT TO OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED.

SOHM UNQUOTE PORTER

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

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BAMAKO  
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